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What Need is There of Religion?

A

PLAIN STATEMENT

OF

THE REASONS FOR RELIGION AND ITS PRACTICE

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

It has been stated by men who have investigated the matter carefully, that only about one-fifth of our people are regular church-goers; of the remaining four-fifths, a small fraction attend divine services occasionally, whilst the rest never cross the threshold of a church, except perhaps to while away away an idle hour. Some of these latter, indeed, still hold that religion is a good thing, at least for their neighbor, but the vast majority seem to have dismissed all thought of religious matters from their minds. They are not precisely opposed to religion, nor do they treat it with contempt; but through absorption in temporal interests, they have reached such a state of mind and conscience, that everything religious is to them a matter of indifference.

The proximate cause of this indifference is, as already intimated, an undue desire to secure and enjoy the good things of this world; yet its ultimate reason reaches down deeper into men's

hearts and minds. Men have lost sight of their true position relative to God, nay, in many instances, they have lost sight of God Himself, and have replaced Him by gods of their own making. They are no longer conscious of the fact that they are creatures, or where that consciousness still remains, they fail to realize what the term itself implies. Forgetful of the Creator, they are necessarily forgetful of their own best interests, and so they abandon themselves to the fleeting things of time.

In this condition of things, it would seem very timely to direct men's attention again to the solemn truths connected with their origin; because these truths form the source whence religious obligations take their rise. The more strongly men are impressed with the thought that they are creatures, and the more clearly they realize what that term implies, the less will they be disposed to rule religion out of their lives.

Hence in the following pages an attempt will be made to set forth the necessity of religion as viewed from the standpoint of creation. After placing the fact of creation beyond all possible doubt, the necessary consequences flowing therefrom will be briefly dis-

cussed and applied to present needs. This method of handling the subject may not be the most popular, yet it is believed to be the most effective. Besides it recommends itself for this other important reason, that many so-called advanced thinkers are just now spending their best efforts to cry down the very idea of creation; so that this booklet will serve the double purpose of arousing such as are merely indifferent, and of answering those others that are openly hostile to the claims of religion.

CHAPTER I.

MAN A MICROCOSM.

Venerable Bede relates, in his history of England's conversion to the Faith, how Edwin, king of Northumbria, one day called together his Thanes to consult with them about the advisability of embracing the Christian religion. Whilst the council was in session, one of the most influential Thanes stated his opinion on the matter in hand as follows: "Often, O king, in the depth of winter, while you are feasting with your Thanes, and the fire is blazing on the hearth, you have seen a sparrow pelted by the storm enter one door and escape by the other. During its passage it was visible, but whence it came or whither it went, you knew not. Such, it seems to me, is the life of man. He walks the earth for a few years; but what precedes his birth, or what is to follow after death, he cannot tell. Undoubtedly, if the new religion can unfold these important

secrets, it must be worthy of your attention, and it ought to be followed."

The new religion, or Christianity, has unfolded the important secrets of man's origin and destiny, but this notwithstanding, the uncertainty of King Edwin's worthy Thane is even now disquieting the hearts of many. To our forebears, good and simple folk, the Mosaic account of man's creation was quite satisfactory, but as the world grew older, there arose a generation of men who considered themselves wiser than their elders, and in their superior wisdom they shook their heads and asked: "How can this thing be?" They could well believe that man had been taken out of the slime of the earth, but that God should have breathed into his face a living soul, passed all belief. For whence did that soul come? Was it made out of nothing? If so, then must be admitted that other statement of the Jewish Chronicler, namely, that "God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them." Yet "this is a hard saying, and who can hear it?" Hence they have rejected the teaching of Christianity concerning this point, and have tried hard to unfold the secrets of man's origin and

destiny after their own fashion; but somehow their fashion leaves the heart of man unsatisfied, and so the world repeats in aimless reverie the little speech of King Edwin's Thane: "Man walks the earth for a few years; but what precedes his birth, or what is to follow after death, he cannot tell."

Hence in the first part of this little treatise we shall endeavor to show that the Holy Book is right when it states that "God created man to his own image." However, in working out the proof of this proposition, it is first of all necessary to understand well what manner of being man is; for as the nature of a being is determined by its origin, man's nature must necessarily point to the source whence he came. To acquire this knowledge of man's nature, we must, of course, study those actions which are proper to him as man. It is a common saying among philosophers that a being is known by its own proper actions; and this saying is fully approved by common sense. Thus, for example, when I see a horse galloping along a highway, I gather from that very fact that a horse is essentially different from the trees that line the same highway, but are rooted to the soil. Or when I notice a grain of wheat send forth

a tiny sprout, which little by little grows up into a stalk, and within a few months produces other grains of wheat, I rightly and necessarily infer that wheat is something altogether different from the pebbles which are imbedded in the same soil, yet always remain the same. If, therefore, we can find some actions that are proper to man, we shall have a key which will enable us to unlock the secrets of his nature.

Here, however, we meet with an apparent difficulty; for man, as the ancients put it, is a microcosm, that is, he combines in himself the properties of all other beings that make up the world around us. Like mineral substances, he is subject to the laws of space and time; he is affected by heat and cold; is acted upon by the forces of attraction and repulsion, and in a variety of other ways shows his kinship with the earth that serves him as a dwelling place. He likewise shares in the peculiarities of the vegetable kingdom. Even as the acorn which is planted in the soil, and under the influences of warmth and moisture displays an activity of a higher order, by means of which it transforms itself little by little into a tiny sprout, and then by years of patient and mysterious toil develops into the stately proportions of a lordly oak;

so does the human body, starting from a mere speck of protoplasm, build up cell by cell and part by part its own organism, until it arrives at full perfection and stands revealed to the world a marvel of grace and strength and beauty. Nor has man less in common with the animal world. He eats and drinks and sleeps, even as does the horse upon which he rides, and the dog that sports at his side. He has the same organs and faculties of sight and hearing and touch; he experiences animal pleasures and sufferings, and propagates his species like unto the beasts and birds that serve for his enjoyment and lucre. He is thus, in very truth, a microcosm, a little world, "from different natures marvelously mixed."

And yet, though man has so much in common with the different orders of other mundane beings, between him and them there is drawn a sharp line of demarcation. In a general way, this differentiation manifests itself in three distinct ways. First, in a more or less continuous progress along the various lines of human activity; second, in the use of rational language; third, in the fact of religion.

That man is by nature progressive, must be evident to every thoughtful observer. Even

those among us who have not yet reached the Scriptural three-score years and ten, can tell of advancements in the various arts and sciences that would pass belief, had we not the testimony of our own experience to convince us of the truth. Even now we live in the midst of progress. Rapid advance is made in every art and science; new industries spring into life, are steadily developed, and become the source of fabulous wealth to individuals and to nations; inventions the most astounding give rise to marvels of science that almost rival the wonders of nature; luxuries unknown to the preceding generation have entered as necessities into our daily lives: — land and sea are covered with the achievements of this spirit of progress. There is progress in the means of transportation; progress in the methods of intercommunication; progress in all that makes work more lucrative and life more enjoyable.

Now this spirit of progress is entirely wanting in other mundane beings. In respect to animals, which alone need be considered in this matter, the Rev. J. O'Neill, in his answer to Mr. Mallock, puts this very pithily when he says: "Truly, they seem not of us: they do not even appear to realize that things are

changing around them: they are heedless of the feverish rush of humanity towards the goal of happiness. It has ever been so with them. Never through the roll of centuries have they shown any personal initiative. From the first they have shivered as men did when the bitter blasts blew, and when the frost and snow encircled them; from the first they have had certain tasks to fulfil, and when the sun set and darkness came down, they, too, like men, betook themselves to rest. They must have felt the same need of physical comfort as men did; yet, they never lit a fire against the winter's cold, never donned a garment to keep out the sleet, never built a shelter for the night, never made a tool to help them at their toil. They have lived as long, and longer, than man on the earth. Yet, at all times, and in all places, uniformity and stability have marked the conduct of individuals within each species. No progress, no change."

The same difference obtains in regard to rational language. With what nicety does not the human voice portray in articulate speech man's ever changing mental condition! How marvelously it accommodates itself to the endless variety of feelings that affect the human

heart! What wealth of thought and sentiment flows from tongue and pen as individuals and nations each play their several parts upon the stage of life! And this is absolutely without parallel in the history of the dumb animals that watch man's ways in all his various moods. They can, indeed, give signs of pleasure and pain, yet their barkings and bleatings and whinnyings are not a whit more rational than the clanging notes of the clavichord. Hence no species of animals ever produce orators or singers or musicians that rise above their fellows as a Webster or Patti or Mozart rose above the common level of human excellence. They may utter loud reverberating sounds, or pour forth their souls in sweetest melody, yet as far as rational expression is concerned, they ever remain dumb as the Egyptian sphinx.

Nor is the line less sharply drawn in the matter of religious sentiments. Even the lowest savage of the human kind has some notion of a Supreme Being; he knows the difference between right and wrong, and expects a life of happiness beyond the silence of the tomb. Men may be very unreligious in their outward showing, yet they cannot effectively silence the voice of conscience, which proclaims in trum-

pet tones their duties to the Godhead. They may for a time amuse themselves exclusively with worldly trifles, but there ever remains in their hearts a void which no things of earth can fill. They know that they were born for higher things, though passion may prompt them to repress such knowledge. Do animals possess sentiments of a like nature? Are they conscious that they must bow in reverence to the Great Spirit, who scatters His blessings broadcast over field and forest? They certainly manifest no sign of such inward promptings. There is not found among them a single individual that rises above the things of sense; not one that sacrifices present enjoyments for future glory. They eat their fill and dream their dreams, and care not what may be their future state.

Now this marked difference between the activities of man and animals postulates an essential difference in their natures. There must be something in the constitution of man that essentially differentiates him from all other beings. For a being's nature must correspond to its own proper activity. And what is this something? If we take the main points of difference between man and brute beasts, we

find that there is always question of some sort of spiritual activity, that is, an activity which is independent of matter. Thus take progress in its different forms; it necessarily implies a faculty that is capable of forming general ideas and universal concepts; a faculty that enables man to reflect upon his own actions, and to form abstract judgments. In order to span the gulf, for instance, that separates the lumbering steam carriage of fifty years ago from the "Lightning Express" of to-day, there was need of an amount of abstract reasoning and mathematical calculation that seems beyond all belief when looked at in its final summation. And so it is in every other line of progressive activity. Wherever there is progress the cognoscitive faculty bodies forth an ideal which has no actual existence as an individual entity, but represents a combination of concepts that are the result of a spiritualizing process.

Nor is this intellectual activity less apparent in the use of rational language; for such "language implies the transference of thoughts" that are spiritual in their nature. In fact, our whole system of education is based upon the transference of spiritual ideas. How could the professor possibly train his pupils in the arts

and sciences, or impart to them a right apprehension of the duties of good citizenship, if he could not by means of rational speech convey to their minds his own ideals? Yet ideals, as was already shown, go beyond the range of sense perception.

It is the same in respect to religion. There can be no religion without spiritual ideas. Before man recognizes even the possibility of worship, he must have a concept of a Supreme Being, a Divine Person, Who in one way or another has called human nature into existence. He must understand the meaning of virtue and vice, of law and order, of reward and punishment. Yet all this implies intellectuality; it postulates something beyond a faculty that is merely capable of forming sensible images.

Hence that which distinguishes man from brute animals is the capacity of spiritual operation — the capacity of eliciting acts which are independent of concrete material conditions. Perhaps you say, for aught we know, animals may also be possessed of such capacities. They are not. For if they were they must show it by their actions. A power that is never actuated is useless, and cannot be conferred by na-

ture; because nature does not act uselessly. Yet no animal has ever exhibited signs of intellectuality. There has never been any progress in individuals or classes; there is no sign of rational speech; no indication of religious sentiment. The sum total of their activity is confined to the range of sense perception, and hence their highest faculties are necessarily identified with their bodily senses.

Now this intellectual activity which is proper to man postulates a spiritual soul, that is, a simple, inextended, and indivisible entity, really distinct from man's body. If any part of the human body be subjected to chemical analysis, it is found to consist of the same elements that are present in lifeless matter. It contains carbon and phosphorous and oxygen and hydrogen, besides other elementary substances in various proportions. And that these elementary substances, no matter how "marvelously mixed," cannot produce spiritual ideas is quite manifest from the nature of the case. Spiritual ideas are simple entities; they have no extension, no parts, no shape, no form; they cannot be halved and quartered as can the elements of which man's body is composed. They are absolutely indivisible, and therefore

independent of matter. Consequently that part of man which thinks and judges must be simple, without parts, and indivisible; because, as was stated before, the nature of a being is of the same kind as the actions which it elicits.

The presence of such a simple element in man becomes more evident still from the fact that the mental faculty can reflect upon itself and watch its own actions. The mind not only thinks and judges, but it is conscious of these operations, and contemplates its entire self as it compares concept with concept and finally identifies them in an affirmative judgment. Anyone who will take the trouble may verify this for himself by examining into his own mental actions. Now this would be altogether impossible if either the faculty or its acts were extended, or had parts. In an extended being one part may be applied to another, but the whole cannot be turned back upon itself; nor can the quality which inheres one part be identified with the quality which inheres another. Hence as the eye cannot turn back upon itself and see its own vision just because it is extended, so, contrariwise, the mind can reflect upon itself and know its own knowledge just because it is not extended. Hence there is in

man a simple element which is in its operation, and therefore in its being, independent of the body; and that element is man's soul, spiritual in its nature as in its highest activity.

This same conclusion is reached when we consider the moral side of man's nature; for this postulates in him an element that is endowed with freedom of choice. If man were not free, there would be no distinction between virtue and vice, and courts of justice would be a mockery. Does the plank that saves the life of a shipwrecked mariner practice virtue? Does the brick that falls from the scaffolding and kills a chance passer-by commit murder? Would you reward the one and punish the other? Yet if man is not free, his actions are morally in the same category as that of the floating plank and the falling brick; and every reward bestowed and punishment inflicted would be an outrage against nature. Nay, if man were not free, nature would contradict herself. For some men say that man was created, others assert that he was not created; some maintain that there is a God, others contend that there is no God; and if men are not free, their statements are the necessary utterances of nature: yet they are contradictory

statements, and consequently, on the supposition that man is not free, nature contradicts herself; nature is a liar — an imputation which the men against whom we are arguing would be the very first to resent. On the other hand, man's body is not free; for that body is matter; it is composed of the same elements as the stone which you fling at a dog, or the clod of earth you spurn with your foot. Of itself it is lifeless, inanimate, brute matter; and matter under any given conditions can act but one way; it is not free; it has no choice; it must act as it does and cannot act otherwise. Therefore there is in man an element that is essentially different from his body: an element endowed with intelligence and freedom, and that element is man's soul.

Moreover, the mere fact that man has a soul, which is really distinct from his body, is quite evident from what science teaches concerning the continuous changes that take place in man's bodily constitution. Scientists tell us that within the space of about seven years our bodily substance is totally renewed, so that, if we had no souls, we should be entirely different individuals from those we were seven years ago. We should be no longer the sons and

daughters of the fathers and mothers who cared for us so tenderly in our childhood days. Mothers might as well caress a piece of furniture as the lovely daughter just budding into maidenhood, for that daughter would be to her a total stranger. Again, if we had no souls, it would be impossible to remember past events since the happening of which more than seven years had elapsed; because the very substance upon which said events made an impression would have disappeared from the human constitution. And still our memories go back to earliest childhood days, even though we may have reached our three-score years and ten. Hence we certainly have a soul; a something which is not matter, but which in the continuous flux of material elements ever preserves its own identity. It is true, this fact in itself does not show that our souls are spiritual in their nature, yet as our own consciousness tells us that we remember not only concrete and material facts, but also spiritual thoughts and abstract judgments, the spirituality of our souls can in no wise be doubted. Hence this argument re-enforces those which were given before, though they were of themselves strong enough to prove the matter in hand.

Consequently though man contains within himself all the perfections of purely material beings, yet to these he adds others that reach up into the spirit world. Half spirit, half matter, he is in contact with both heaven and earth. In the words of the poet, he is

From different natures marvelously mixed;
  Connection exquisite of distant worlds:
Dim miniature of greatness absolute —
  An heir of glory, a frail child of dust.

It is by reason of his spiritual soul that man stands forth as the acknowledged lord and ruler of the earth's vast domain. In bodily perfection he is surpassed by many a brute beast that quails before him in craven fear. He has neither the immense strength of the lion nor the ponderous weight of the elephant, yet both are made to do his bidding, and serve him as his obsequious slaves. It is not the strength of his arm nor the endurance of his bodily frame, but the greater power of his intellect and will, that makes nature and nature's forces subservient to his purposes; and these he possesses in virtue of his spiritual soul.

CHAPTER II.

IS MAN A CREATURE?

The considerations dwelt upon in the preceding chapter lead unavoidably to the conclusion that man is not wholly of a material nature. He is a compound being, consisting of a material body and an immaterial or spiritual soul. It is this soul that gives him his true worth and value. His body may be beautiful, but its beauty is fleeting, like the beauty of the flower; it fades before it has well begun to charm; it may be strong, but its strength is that of the reed, which is bruised and broken by the passing storm. A few short years, and the eye loses its luster, the cheek its crimson tint, the lips their winsome smile, the frame its noble bearing;— it shrinks and withers and totters into the grewsome grave. But within that corruptible body; within that shell of weakness, lies hidden a pearl of price unknown; there dwells an incorruptible soul: — a spirit en-

dowed with intelligence and freedom, rising in dignity above the world of matter even as the heavens rise in height above the earth. The body may be wasted by disease; it may be disfigured by an accident; it may become an object of disgust in the squalor of poverty; yet there always remains enshrined within it that godlike soul which knows of no change or corruption, because it is not made up of parts that can fall asunder.

Such, then, being man's nature, as indicated by his own proper actions, the question now arises whether that nature was created, or whether it owes its existence to some other mode of production; for as we shall see presently, it did not always exist, and therefore it must, in one way or another, have been produced. In order to answer the proposed question clearly, it is, first of all, necessary to have some knowledge concerning the nature of a creative act; and the easiest way of attaining this knowledge will be to inquire briefly into the meaning of the term creature. Now a creature is a being that has been called into existence by a cause outside of itself, and without the aid of pre-existing material. It includes, therefore, two essential notes: First, it

does not contain within itself the reason of its existence, but derives its being from an outside cause; second, it is not made up of pre-existent material, but it is entirely new; so that not only its figure and form and specific qualities have been called into being by the creative act, but its very substance in all its parts — it has been made out of nothing. Hence the creative act is, indeed, a species of production, yet it differs from all other kinds of production in this, that no previously existing material is employed.

To illustrate this point by an example. When a sculptor takes a block of marble, and by his skill transforms it into a beautiful statue, he produces something new; for the statue as such had no previous existence. The marble is marble still, yet the sculptor's art has added to it grace of form and beauty of feature; he has drawn from the shapeless mass the likeness of man, and has infused into the cold stone the warmth of human affection. Still his act is not creative; because he made use of pre-existing material. The marble itself was not produced by the sculptor; it had previous existence, and was a necessary prerequisite to the exercise of his skill. But now

let us suppose that this same sculptor were able to produce said statue by the mere power of his will, without the use of any material whatever, then his act would be creative. For on that supposition he not only gave existence to the form of the statue, but to its very substance; he produced being out of non-being, and the statue would be his own creature.

If man, therefore, is a creature, it must have been by an act like this that human nature was called into existence. God spoke and man was made — he was made out of nothing, he was created. Here, however, I might remark in passing, that the idea of creation is sufficiently verified in man, even if one of the elements of which he is composed can be referred to creation only indirectly, as will be more fully explained when we come to speak of the formation of man's body.

That human nature as such, precisely in so far as it is human nature, does not contain within itself the reason of its own being is sufficiently evident from the fact that man did not always exist. Whatever begins to exist, must be produced by some cause outside of itself; because nothing can be self-productive, and that for the obvious reason, that a being

must exist before it can act. Now that human nature did not always exist is an absolute certainty, as even the most infidel scientists readily concede. Time was when this earth of ours was a seething mass of molten mineral matter, at a temperature of several thousand degrees Fahrenheit; and as human nature cannot now subsist in the fiery depths of a blast furnace, neither could it exist in the seething ocean of incandescent matter that filled all space when the world was still in the process of formation.

Moreover this same fact is quite evident from the very nature of human beings. Whatever may be said of man's dignity and prefection, he is certainly not self-existent. This follows necessarily from his manifest limitations. Bound down by the laws of time and space, dependent in a thousand ways upon finite conditions, he abuts everywhere upon nothingness. He is indeed endowed with sublime perfections, yet the very nature of these perfections proclaims the insufficiency of his being. It is not within his own self, but outside of it and beyond it, that his intellect and will look for an object commensurate with their highest activity. He is, therefore, essen-

tially dependent, and for that very reason, as we shall see more fully in another paragraph, he cannot be the source of his own existence.

Hence man was certainly produced by some extrinsic cause — by some being that is not man. The only question, therefore, that now remains to be solved is, was man created or was he made of some pre-existing material?

To this question a certain class of pseudo-scientists boldly responds that man was not created, but that he is the product of evolution. In fact, they are so positive in regard to this point that they are apt to say some very uncomplimentary things about persons who happen to entertain different views. Moreover, as they are for the most part glib of tongue, and wield a facile pen, their materialistic doctrines have been largely accepted by the unthinking crowd, which is always apt to mistake sound for sense. Hence it may be well to treat this matter somewhat more in detail than is absolutely necessary for our present purpose.

That evolution within certain definite limits is not impossible no one denies. Theoretically it is not repugnant that the different species of plants, for instance, should have been derived

from a small number of prototypes, since they are all essentially of the same perfection. In one way or another, they all have the same powers of nutrition, augmentation, and propagation; though some possess these powers in a higher degree than others. Hence the change of a primitive type into derived species would not imply the production of totally new powers, that is, of powers which were in nowise contained in the original type. The same may be said with regard to the evolutionary origin of animal species. Given a small number of general types, it is theoretically not impossible that they might in course of time give rise to a vast variety of subordinate species; because animals like plants, are all possessed of the same essential powers. Nay, looking at the matter merely from the standpoint of reason, it is not even repugnant that the human body should have been derived from some animal ancestor, in as much as its organic structure is not necessarily of an essentially higher order. I say, looking at matter merely from the standpoint of reason, for if we consult Revelation and the mind of the Church, the evolutionary origin of the human body cannot be

defended, at least if it be viewed as a fact, and not merely as a theory.

So much for the theoretical view of evolution as limited to the different orders of being within their own sphere. As regards the transition from order to order, that is, the evolution of plant life into animal life, and of animal life into human life, the matter looks quite different. Such an evolution would require the production of new powers, which were in nowise contained in the producing cause, and therefore it is theoretically impossible. Thus mineral substances do not have the powers of vegetation; plants do not possess the faculties of sensitive cognition; nor are animals endowed with intellect and free will. Hence if there were a transition from order to order, we should have an effect without a sufficient cause, which is repugnant to reason. I do not say that there is no room for dispute in regard to this sort of evolution as far as animal and plant life is concerned; but there is certainly none whatever when human life comes in question, as we shall see presently.

Viewing evolution as a fact, we must confine ourselves to its bearing upon the matter under discussion; and this we shall do if we

make the following statements, of which the last one alone needs to be considered in detail. First, there is no trace of any evolutionary process in the sense that life is the product of non-life; second, no positive proof has ever been advanced to show that animal life was evolved out of plant life; third, there is no indication of any kind which can be interpreted as a proof that human life has been derived from mere animal life. No scientist, who values his reputation for veracity, dares assert that he has found proof positive of any such evolution. There are, indeed, certain facts in the different orders of being, which might very well be explained on the evolutionary hypothesis, but they can be just as satisfactorily explained on the theory of creation. On the other hand, so great are the difficulties that stand in the way of this sort of evolution, even if limited to animal and plant life, that it is practically devoid of all probability; whereas if applied to human life, the arguments against it are so strong and convincing that no man, who is unbiased and can grasp the force of an argument, will ever seriously defend the evolutionary origin of the human species.

To form an idea of the difficulties which Ev-

olutionists must try to explain away in order to eliminate the creative act, we need but call to mind the original condition of the universe, as described by all scientists who have investigated the matter. Time was when there was absolutely nothing in existence besides the elements of which lifeless matter is composed. Look at the universe as it then wheeled through space, a shapeless mass of incandescent vapor! Can any man, in his right mind, believe that there were contained within that glowing furnace the remotest beginnings of human life? Yet if the evolutionary theory be true, human life must have been there in some form or shape; because human life, Evolutionists say, was evolved out of that matter — it is the effect produced by the causality of that matter, and the effect must be precontained in its cause.

Again, look at man as he exists to-day, and as he has existed as far back as history can unseal the distant past. Dare you assert that he does not belong to an order of beings essentially higher than that to which belongs the clod of earth he spurns with his foot? Dare any one pretend that there is no such a thing as thought and judgment; no such a thing as

free choice, resulting in virtue or vice? Yet if man is the product of evolution, he cannot belong to an order of beings essentially higher than that of mineral substances; he cannot act in a manner essentially different from that of inanimate matter — he can neither think, nor will, nor choose, nor practice virtue, nor sin; because such power is not contained in lifeless matter, and the effect cannot be superior to its cause, either in the perfection of its being, or in the order of its activity.

Nor can the difficulty be obviated by stating that man is an evolution of the highest order of animal life. For whence did animal life come? Is it an evolution of plant life? And is this in its turn an evolution of mineral matter? If so, then we are precisely where we were before; because in that case, human life, as well as animal and plant life, was originally contained in the potencies of brute matter. Or was animal life created, and in course of time so perfected by an evolutionary process that man was the final result? If you say this, you shorten the chain indeed, but you do not lessen the difficulty. Are brute beasts endowed with intellect and free will? Are they capable of forming spiritual ideas and abstract

judgments? Do they practice virtue or commit sin? Have you ever discovered any sign of spiritual activity in bird or beast? No one who studies the matter with an unbiased mind, and understands the meaning of intellect and free will, has ever yet credited them with such powers. Some of them do, indeed, show wonderful ingenuity along certain lines, yet the very fact that there is no progress whatever, either in individuals or classes, shows conclusively that their actions proceed entirely from instinct and sense experience. Of intellect and free will there is not a trace. And yet if animals do not possess these powers, it is sheer folly to say that human nature is the evolutionary product of animal life; because the effect cannot surpass its cause.

The fundamental mistake of Evolutionists lies in the false supposition that the human soul is material in its nature. The moment anyone asserts that a mere modification of elementary substances, such as is involved in the very concept of evolution, can be productive of a human soul, he takes it for granted that the human soul is the same in kind as these elements themselves. For a mere modification of material elements, no matter how radical it be,

cannot result in anything spiritual; because, as was shown in the preceding chapter, a spirit is a simple and indivisible entity, wholly independent of matter. Yet the human soul, as was proved before, is most certainly spiritual in its nature, and therefore, to use a homely phrase, you can no more evolve it out of matter than you can squeeze blood out of a turnip.

In fact, so strong are these various objections against evolution, in as far as it applies to man, that there are very few scientists, worthy of the name, who defend the evolutionary origin of the human species. There is, indeed, much loud talking in its favor, but that is mostly done by newspaper-scientists, who are bitterly conscious of the fact that the only means at their disposal to attract the world's attention is to be sensational.

Setting aside, therefore, the theory of evolution, as wholly inadequate to explain the origin of human nature, we might without further ado conclude that man was created. For we have proved already that man was certainly produced, and that he was certainly not produced by an evolutionary process; and as there is no other possible mode of production by

which he might have been called into existence except creation, we are forced to fall back upon the creative act as the only sufficient reason that can account for his origin. I call attention to this fact because the direct proof for creation is necessarily somewhat metaphysical, and may, therefore, perhaps not appeal so strongly to the general reader. In itself, however, the proof is very strong, and cannot be gainsaid by anyone who can grasp the force of metaphysical argument.

In order to make the reasoning as clear as the abstract nature of the subject permits, it will be best to consider separately the two essential parts of which man is composed. Man is one being, yet he is made up of two distinct elements, soul and body. We shall first endeavor to prove the creation of the soul; and for that purpose we must recall what was said in the first chapter concerning the nature of the human soul, namely, that it is a simple and indivisible substance, endowed with an intellect and free will. It is upon this point that the argument turns, in as much as a spirit cannot be fashioned from pre-existing material, but if produced at all, it must be made out of nothing, and therefore it must be created. For if we

suppose that a spirit was made of pre-existing material, that material was either a spirit or it was matter; if it was a spirit nothing could be made out of it; because all production in which pre-existing material is employed presupposes parts in that material. A block of marble, for example, could not possibly be transformed into a statue, if it had no parts that admitted of being chiseled and shaped and modified. Yet a spirit is without parts, it is simple and indivisible; hence the soul could in no way have been made of material that was spiritual in its nature. Nor could said material have been matter; because matter cannot be changed into a spirit; they belong to totally different orders of being, whereas that which is made out of something else must at least in part agree with the same in its essential properties. Consequently in the production of the human soul, no pre-existing material was employed, and therefore it was created.

Nor will it do to fall back upon Pantheistic theories, maintaining that man was made of God's own substance; because the same difficulty recurs. Either God is a spirit or He is matter; if He is a spirit, then He cannot be divided; if He is matter, then man's soul should

also be matter; yet it is a spirit; as was shown before. Neither can the human soul have proceeded from God by way of generation, as some have foolishly maintained. For if that were the origin of our souls, we should all be true gods of true God, and, as a consequence, we should all be infinitely perfect and perfectly happy, which we are certainly not. Hence the human soul was not only produced, but it was produced out of nothing, it was created.

To this some will likely enough object that it is hard to conceive how anything can be made out of nothing. Well, it is hard, yet this difficulty does not arise from any intrinsic impossibility of such a production in itself, but from the evident fact that our intellects are finite. Certainly no one has ever yet shown that the concept of creation involves a contradiction, and therefore it cannot be said to be impossible. The fact that we do not fully understand its inmost nature, is no more an objection against creation than it is against the thousand and one facts which we admit every day of our lives though we are not able to explain them. As far as our positive knowledge of the points in question goes, the creation of the universe is

hardly more of a mystery than the every-day fact of nutrition. Listen to what a man versed in medical science has to say on the nutrition of an infant that lives entirely on milk. It is sufficiently striking to prepare us for greater marvels than the materialistic philosophy of Evolutionists has ever dreamt of. He says: "How wonderful that so common and simple a thing as milk should hold in solution all the elements necessary to the composition of an ear, an eye, or a tooth — that this despised substance should be capable of being changed, by commixture with the juices of the body and by exposure to common air in the lungs, into blood — and that from this single fluid should be produced all those diversified and heterogeneous matters which make up the entire body — the brittle bones, the soft and pulpy brain, the hard and horny nails, the silky hair, the flesh, the fat, the skin, everything in fact from the corn on my lord's toe to the down on my lady's cheek — from the sweat on the brow of labor to the dew on the lip of beauty." Surely "it is hard to conceive" how from so plebeian a thing as milk here can result parts so diversified as make up the chubby figure of a little cherub; yet we admit it without demur: why

then should we take exception to the mystery of creation? As a concept, it is not more repugnant than nutrition, and as a fact, it is established by arguments equally as strong.

Whatever way, therefore, we may consider the matter, reason cannot account for the existence of the human soul except by referring its origin to a creative act. This would, strictly speaking, suffice for our present purpose. If the soul was created, then man must make religion an essential part of his life; because man is what he is by reason of his soul. From it the body receives all that elevates it above the condition of brute matter, and therefore it also must render tribute to the Creator. However it may without much difficulty be shown that the very matter, of which the human body is composed, must also be referred to creation as the ultimate reason of its existence. Holy Scripture tells us, indeed, that the body of Adam was formed of the slime of the earth, yet the earth itself, and all that it contains, must originally have been drawn out of nothingness; and so must all finite beings that make up the universe. For they are all subject to change, they are all limited and essentially dependent; consequently they cannot

contain within themselves the source of their being, but must be the effect of some pre-existing cause, which, being uncaused, possesses the power to actuate whatever involves no contradiction.

I know there are not wanting scientists who speak of matter as though it were self-existent, but they have more eloquence than logic; more self-conceit than science. No one can deny, and in fact no one does deny, that every single being of which we have any experience, depends upon something distinct from itself. All mundane beings whatever, from the highest to the lowest, have dependence engraven upon their nature. Matter itself is dependent and changeable; it may be modified in a thousand different ways, as any physicist and chemist can prove by an endless variety of experiments. But if matter be changeable and dependent, it cannot be self-existent, because it is limited in perfection. The very fact that a being is the source of its own existence, implies infinite perfection in that being; because there is nothing whatever to give it limitation. All limitation must necessarily arise from opposition, which is ultimately determined by the producing cause. Thus, for instance, color, as a physical

quality, is limited because it is opposed to every other physical quality, such as sound or odor; and that limitation is derived from the cause which gives color its existence. Now if a being is self-existent, such opposition is impossible, because the very concept of self-existence excludes, in its regard, all productive causality.

Perhaps you will say that self-existent matter is limited because such is its nature. But, pray, why should its nature be such? There must be a reason for it; yet that reason you cannot find in self-existence: for self-existence is a perfection, it is perfection as such, and therefore it cannot, of itself, exclude other perfections, but must include them all. Hence if matter were self-existent, it should be infinitely perfect and absolutely unchangeable; and as it is neither one nor the other, we must perforce conclude that it was drawn out of nothingness by the omnipotent fiat of the Creator, even as was the human soul.

Man is, therefore, in the strictest sense of the term, a creature. There is absolutely nothing in the human compound that cannot be referred to creation as the ultimate reason of its existence. Each single soul, as it comes into

being, is the immediate product of a creative act; and the body, though proximately formed of pre-existing matter, must yet by reason of that matter be referred to the same act. Consequently human nature is totally dependent on the Creator, and if such dependence is the source of religious obligations, then man must make religion an essential part of his life.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGION A NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF CREATION.

Reason, as we have seen thus far, cannot account for man's existence except by referring it to a creative act. The very fact that man can think and judge and freely choose, affords a convincing proof that he has a spiritual soul, which cannot possibly have been called into being except by the omnipotent will of a Creator. Nay, even his body, though composed of matter, must also be referred to the same cause as the ultimate reason of its existence; because as matter is evidently limited in perfection, it cannot be self-existent, since the very concept of self-existence implies infinite perfection. Human nature, therefore, was in its entirety created by an extrinsic, self-existent cause, which, as we shall see presently, can be none other than God, the beginning and end of all things.

Now the first and most necessary effect of creation, as far as man is concerned, is undoubtedy his absolute dependence on the Creator. The fact as well as the nature of this dependence may to some extent be inferred from a familiar example. I presume most of you have, at one time or another, had opportunity of contemplating the feeble beginnings of human life as manifested in a new-born babe. If at such a time you were in a reflective mood, you must have been struck, above all else, with the utter helplessness of the tiny newcomer. Ushered into existence without being at all consulted in the matter, and having in no-wise contributed thereunto, he begins his career in a state of the most absolute dependence. He has received his life from others, and to others he must look for its continuance. He has his wants as any other human being of maturer years, yet he can do nothing to satisfy them. Unable to use the faculties of his soul or the powers of his body, he can neither flee from danger nor make the slightest effort in his own defense. So absolutely dependent is he upon the loving care of father and mother, or of others who may take their place, that deprived of it, his young life

would soon ebb away. Left to himself, he can but utter a cry of distress, and sink into the silent grave.

In a similar manner do we, as creatures, depend on the Creator; with this difference, however, that our dependence is much more absolute and universal. It is a dependence that extends itself to all we are and have and are able to accomplish. For body and soul we are indebted to God's goodness and love and power. The faculties of our souls and the powers of our bodies are gifts of the Creator's bounty; health of body and soundness of mind come from the same divine source; the opportunities we have of invigorating the one and improving the other have been provided by the all-provident Author of our being. And as we have thus been called into existence by divine omnipotence, so must we be sustained by the same at every moment of our lives; for as we have not within ourselves the source of our being, we can continue in existence only so long as we lean upon the power that called us out of nothingness. Nor is it our being only that depends on this creative and sustaining power, but our actions as well. That which is dependent in its essence must be dependent in its

operation; because no effect can be superior to its cause. Consequently, though the Creator has endowed us with certain active powers, nevertheless we cannot use them except in so far as He concurs with our efforts. Without His active co-operation we cannot so much as move a finger. The little babe, to which I referred above, can, independently of its parents, at least shed a tear of sorrow, or utter a cry of distress; yet we, as creatures, can do neither the one nor the other without God's help and assistance. Of ourselves we are nothing, and left to ourselves we can do nothing. For our being and for our actions we depend on the God Who made us.

And as this dependence is so universal that it extends itself to all that is and all that can be, so also is it most absolute; so absolute, in fact, that it makes the creature the inalienable property of the Creator. It matters not who we are, or what we possess, or to what eminence we may attain, there is, and ever must remain, engraven upon all the indelible mark of God's unlimited and unconditioned ownership. We may have the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, the wealth of Crœsus, the power of Alexander, the genius of Napo-

leon; still with all that we cannot wipe away the birthmark that points to the nothingness of our origin and to the insufficiency of our being. Our fellow men may look up to us in wonder and admiration; poets may sing our praise, and history record our greatness; yet through the pæons of praise and acclamations of wonder there resounds evermore the Creator's voice, claiming His own: "Thou art mine — thou and all thou hast, and all thou canst accomplish." The child may in course of time become independent of the father who begot him, and of the mother who bore him in her womb; but the creature can never become independent of the Creator, for its very being spells dependence.

Now it is because of this universal and absolute dependence that religion is for man a matter of the strictest obligation. Just because man is essentially dependent, therefore must he also be essentially religious. For in whatever way religion may be defined, if the definition be at all a true one, it must ultimately come to this, that the essence of religion consists in a free and practical acknowledgment of man's dependence on God. This acknowledgment is implied in every act of religion. Whether we

adore God, or thank Him for benefits received, or implore His help, or offer Him sacrifices, we always appear before Him as beings subject to His authority and dependent upon His bounty. This same acknowledgment of our dependence is expressed by the very name of religion, which as Lactantius so well put it, signifies a bond of filial devotion linking human nature to the divine. Man is religious only in so far as, in harmony with his own nature, he freely submits his intellect and will to the sovereign authority of God, and, in consequence of this submission, brings his life into accord with God's law. And that this submission to God, which finds practical expression in a life of worship and virtue, is for man a matter of the strictest obligation, ought to be quite evident from what has already been said concerning the creature's absolute dependence on the Creator. For if God has called us into being; if He has drawn us out of nothingness; if He sustains and helps us in all we do, then we depend on Him for all we are and have, and then right reason demands that we acknowledge this dependence and act in accordance with the same. Such an acknowledgment is purely and simply a practical admission of the truth, and whoso

refuses to make it, renders himself thereby guilty of a falsehood, placing himself in open and direct opposition to the plain and necessary demands of right reason. If we are not gods ourselves, then we are the creatures of God; and if we are the creatures of God, then we must worship Him as our Creator; then His will is sovereign and must be the law that governs our actions.

In the definition of religion just given, it is indeed stated that man's acknowledgment of his dependence on God is a free act, yet this does not imply that he is at liberty to do in the matter as he pleases. Religious worship must be free, because it must be in harmony with man's nature; but that freedom is only physical, not moral. Physically we are free to refuse God the honor and service that are His due, but morally we are under the strictest obligation to render Him both the one and the other; just as we are physically free to break every law of the state, yet are morally bound to observe these same laws. So absolute and universal are these religious obligations, that God Himself cannot grant a dispensation from them to a single one of His reasonable creatures. Such a dispensation would be a sub-

version of the whole moral order, and would be tantamount to an open denial of God's authority over the works of His hands. Nay, it would be equivalent to a denial of God's very existence; for it would be in direct opposition to His wisdom and holiness, and as these are essential attributes of the Divinity, it would also be in direct opposition to the Divinity as such, and therefore it would constitute a denial of God's very being. It is metaphysically impossible that a creature should not depend on its Creator, and it is also metaphysically impossible that the Creator should not demand an acknowledgment of this dependence. The creature's dependence is a necessary and objective truth that admits of no exception, and as God, Who is infinitely truthful, must necessarily act in conformity with truth in all its bearings, He cannot possibly allow His creatures to withhold the acknowledgment of their dependence on Him as their Creator.

To illustrate this somewhat abstract matter by a concrete example. Let us suppose that a father were to address his children after this fashion. It is true, I am your father; you owe your existence to me; I have taken care of you, and supplied you with all you needed in your

infancy; I also love you dearly, and am most anxious that you should do right: but as to your conduct towards me, I leave that entirely to your own discretion. If you wish to acknowledge me as your father, and honor me as such before men, you may do so; if you refuse to give me a place in your hearts, and to show me any deference in public, I am satisfied; if you do what I tell you, it is well; if you utterly disregard my wishes, it is also well; if you thank me for what I have done in your behalf, I shall be glad; if you forget all benefits received from me, I shall not be offended. In fact you may treat me as if I had no existence; you may walk your own independent way, and take for your own enjoyment all I possess without so much as saying: "By your leave." Suppose a father were to say this to his children, what would be the comment of his neighbors? What would be your own comment? Why, your first suggestion would be to shut him up in a lunatic asylum. His conduct would be so directly opposed to the plain demands of common sense, that every man and woman would set him down as a fool. There is not a sensible person living who fails to see that the fact of procreation gives rise,

not only to the right, but also to the duty of demanding respect and reverence and love and obedience from children. There may be some who are unable to give the philosophical reason why this should be so, but they know that it is so — it is Nature's own teaching.

Now, if the relation of children to their parents be such, that a father cannot dispense his offspring from the duty of honoring and loving and obeying him, can you suppose that the relation of creatures to their Creator admits of any such dispensation? Does the child owe to its parents even the one-tenth part of what a creature owes to its Creator? Parents give of what they have received; God gives of what is absolutely His own. Children depend on their parents only partially and for a limited period of their lives; creatures are dependent on their Creator for all they are and have, and at every moment of their existence. Hence if God, by an impossible supposition, were to dispense His creatures from the obligation of religious worship and service, He would commit a moral wrong, and *ipso facto* cease to be God.

Again, what would you say if children were to take the law into their own hands? If they were to completely ignore the most loving of

mothers and the kindest of fathers? If they were never to give them an affectionate thought or kind word? If they were to disregard their commands and put themselves into bondage to strangers? You would call them moral degenerates and monsters of impiety, who should by rights serve a term in the workhouse. Well, apply that to those who set aside their religious obligations. They do worse by God than any child can ever do by its parents. For never did father or mother love their children as God loves His reasonable creatures; and never did children so completely ignore their parents as the irreligious ignore their God. Hence the most immoral of all beings is he who casts off the bonds of religion. He arrogates to himself a power which not even God possesses. The thief is immoral, the murderer is immoral, the libertine is immoral; yet more immoral than any one of these is the irreligious worlding, who ignores the God that made him. His immorality is at once more fundamental and more universal. The immorality of the criminal is but a passing disorder, and confined to the violation of some particular precept, whereas the irreligious places himself in direct and permanent opposition to the whole

moral order. Denying his dependence on God, he takes away the very foundation of morality.

This conclusion is so evident and far-reaching that it leaves no escape except on the supposition that the Creator, whom we call God, is nothing but an ever-present, ever-active force, devoid of all rational existence, without intellect and will, the aggregate of a thousand varied energies, all classed under the one name, Nature. Yet this supposition is not only without foundation, but it involves a manifest contradiction. It is a received axiom in philosophy that whatever perfection is found in the effect produced, must be contained in the producing cause. The truth of this axiom will readily be admitted by every man of common sense; for it is but another way of stating that no one can give what he himself does not possess. Can a sculptor transform a shapeless block of marble into an Apollo or a Hercules, if he has no mental concept of these heroes of the mythical past? Yet this concept is all that he embodies in the marble; it is the one thing which he reproduces outside of himself, and if he did not possess it, he could no more produce said statues than he could see without eyes or hear without ears. Perhaps you say, a machine can

make statues as well as any sculptor. Certainly, provided you have a man, or some other rational being, that can make the machine. It always remains true, that whatever is produced must in some manner be contained in the cause that produces it. I say, in some manner; for it is not necessary that an effect be precontained in its cause precisely as it is in itself; it may be there as a perfection of a higher order. Thus, in the example just given, the statue is not in the sculptor's mind as it is in itself; but there is in his mind a perfection at least equal to that which he embodies in marble, and which constitutes the formal being of the statue.

Hence as no one can give what he does not possess, it follows necessarily that all perfections, which are found in the universe, must have their counterpart, that is, an equally high perfection, in the world's Creator; in fact, they can only be so many limited imitations of the Creator's own being. All that is beautiful in nature and in art, is beautiful simply because through it shines a faint glimmer of that divine beauty which served it as a model and exemplar. All that is good and holy is such only in so far as it partakes of that divine

goodness and holiness which gave it being and order. All that is noble and high and sublime, can lay claim to these attributes for no other reason than that it resembles Him whose almighty fiat drew the world out of nothingness. There can be no perfection in the created universe, which does not have a corresponding, though a much higher perfection in the Creator; in which higher perfection it is at least virtually included. Yet in the universe there is personality; there is intelligence; there is freedom. Man is a rational nature having individual existence, and therefore he is a person. Man has an intellect; he is capable, not only of perceiving objects by the aid of his senses, but also of forming simple ideas, and of reflecting upon his own cognoscitive acts. Man is free; he has the power of choosing the way in which he will act under given circumstances. Hence man's Creator must have personality — He must be a personal God, possessed of intelligence and free will. To say that the creative cause of the universe is but a blind, necessarily acting force, is to state in so many words that the effect can be superior to its cause — a state-

ment which the merest tyro in philosophy would stigmatize as absurd.

Nay more, not only must the Creator contain all the perfections of His creatures, but He must contain them in an infinitely high degree — He must be infinite. Anyone who knows what the universe is, and how it came into being, infers this almost necessarily without any further reasoning about the matter. Take, for instance, a man of ordinary intelligence, and show him the countless stars that stud the midnight sky; tell him that each single one of these twinkling points of light is an immense sun, at least equal in magnitude to our own; tell him also that our sun is so vast in size that it might be sliced up into a million parts, each one of which would be larger than the earth: make him understand that all these big suns are rushing through space with a speed greater than that of a cannon ball, and yet at the same time move with a precision which is not found in the most delicately adjusted machine of human make; then add that all this, so vast, so perfect, so incomprehensible, was produced, not by countless years of stupendous toil, but by one little word: — what, do you think, will be his com-

ment? Only this: "The person who spoke that little word must be great beyond bounds, and to his power and wisdom there can be no limit." Nature itself would make this comment, and Nature's comments are infallibly true.

What ordinary people thus accept instinctively, philosophers prove by arguments that cannot be gainsaid. The course of reasoning implied in these arguments is necessarily very metaphysical, and therefore more or less beyond the reach of the general reader; yet it may be well to suggest at least one, for the sake of those who wish to study the matter somewhat more thoroughly. The very fact of creation supplies us with such an argument, in as much as the Creator must necessarily be infinite in perfection of being. For that Creator is the First Cause, therefore uncaused and self-existent. He is independent of all that is extrinsic to Himself; because between Him and His creatures there is no community of nature; hence there is nothing to limit His perfections. Nor can He contain within His own being the principle of limitation; for being as such does not limit itself, as was pointed out in the preceding chapter: consequently

He must have being without limit, and therefore He must be infinite. There are no bounds to His intellect and will, even as there are no limits to His being. His knowledge and wisdom, His goodness and holiness, His mercy and justice, and whatever other attributes we may think of, comprise all that their concept implies. As He is the source of all being, so does He contain being in all its fulness.

Reason, therefore, points unmistakably to God as a being that must be worshipped. To Him man must look up in love and reverence and holy awe. Human nature is so constituted that it goes out spontaneously to all that is great and good. It is so in things human, and it must be so in things divine. Hence if man's dependent condition demands religious submission to his Creator, the Creator's infinite perfection calls for enthusiastic spontaneity in that submission. Man is by nature a servant, yet the greatness of his Master makes that servitude a privilege as well as a duty. In spite of all this, men are physically free to withhold the service required by their Maker; they can ignore the Giver and abuse His gifts; they can walk their own independ-

ent way, setting completely aside the God Who made them, and fashion for themselves gods of silver and gold, for they are servants, not slaves: but in doing so they make their lives an uninterrupted protest against the very first demands of right reason; they burn into their souls the stigma of blackest ingratitude, and fix between themselves and happiness a gulf which they shall not cross forever.

This unavoidable conclusion of an argument that cannot be gainsaid, is still further enforced by the voice of Nature that speaks in every human heart. In fact to the man of good will, who is prepared to follow the dictates of right reason in whatever way they may manifest themselves, there would be no need of further proof to establish the necessity of religion, than the irrepressible cravings of his own nature for an object that he can worship, and in the worship of which he finds rest for his soul. For as this craving is universal, and independent of the material conditions with which man may be surrounded, it must needs proceed from human nature as such, and voices, therefore, an essential need of that nature. It is, as Tertullian so pithily put it, the testimony of a soul that is Christian by na-

ure. Even Cicero, the Roman orator and philosopher, though a pagan, so clearly recognized the force of this argument that he inferred from it without hesitation the existence of God, saying: The consensus of all nations must needs be received as an expression of Nature's law. Nor can the existence of this interior tendency towards an object of worship be doubted. A mere glance into our own hearts reveals it in all its force. Our whole being yearns and craves for something that is better than we ourselves are; for something to which we can cling in our weakness and indigence; for something that can fill the void of our hearts, which no things of earth can fill. And this craving and yearning is not only an intermittent condition, but it is always present in the depths of our souls. It may, indeed, for the time being be overshadowed by material interests and temporal cares; it may be lost sight of amid the glamour and glare of worldly prosperity; but as soon as the soul is allowed to fall back upon herself, she is conscious of this undefined longing, which reaches out into the infinite — the infinite in time and the infinite in perfection of being. It is the yearning of the creature after its Creator, the long-

ing of the child for its Father — it is a manifestation of the kinship that links human nature to the divine.

This gravitation of our whole being towards an object which we can worship, goes far towards proving that religion is a necessary consequence of creation. It does not put the claims of the Creator before the mind in syllogistic form, but it presents them with a clearness and force that resembles intuition. Hence we find that religion as such is a universal historical fact, not confined to any age or country, but the salient feature of all ages, and the common property of all nations. The famous saying of Plutarch, that there may be found cities devoid of all that is necessary for material well-being, but none that are without temples and religious rites, is as true to-day as it was when first uttered more than eighteen centuries ago. Men may fail to give proper expression to the religious needs of their nature, but altogether disregard them they cannot. Even the most pronounced enemies of religion fall unwittingly under its potent sway. They strive, indeed, to dethrone God and to abolish religious worship, but instead of the true God they set up ideal humanity, or some

other idol, before which they bow in lowly reverence. Man's religious instinct is identified with his very nature, and to divest himself of it, he must first cease to be human.

Hence whether we study man's origin, or consider the most obvious needs of his nature, we always come to the same conclusion, namely, that religion must form an essential part of man's life. Without religion, man is untrue to himself and untrue to the God Who made him. Refusing to be the servant of his Creator, he makes himself the slave of creatures.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DUTY OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

In the preceding chapter it was shown, that the first and most necessary consequence of creation, as far as man is concerned, is his absolute dependence on the Creator. It is a dependence that is much more universal and absolute than that of the new-born babe on the loving care of father and mother, or of others who may take their place. The child depends on its parents only partially, and for a limited period of its life; whereas the creature depends on the Creator for all it is and has and can accomplish, and at every moment of its existence. The child may in course of time become independent of father and mother; but the creature can never become independent of the Creator, for its very being spells dependence.

From this absolute and universal dependence of man on his Creator, we deduced the

necessity of religion, on the ground that the very essence of religion consists in a free and practical acknowledgment of man's dependence — an acknowledgment that finds concrete expression in a life of worship and virtue. Even as the child must reverence and love and obey the authors of its being and the preservers of its youthful life, so must man, as a creature, show reverent submission and render loving obedience to the God Who called him out of nothingness, Who sustains him in being, and Who helps him in all his undertakings. He must pay to God "with advantages" all the affections and signs of reverence which children pay to their parents; for he is the child of God, made indeed out of nothing, yet begotten of divine goodness and love.

If we now take this general conclusion of the preceding chapter, and view matters somewhat more in detail, we find that religion is both objective and subjective. The fact of man's dependence necessarily gives rise to certain duties, which he owes to God. These duties are manifold, as is the dependence from which they arise. Thus man depends on God as his sovereign lord, his benefactor, his

father, the source of his being and the term towards which he must tend; hence he owes Him obedience, gratitude, love and adoration. These and similar duties, taken collectively, constitute objective religion; which, therefore, may be defined as the sum total of duties which man owes to God.

This same dependence, to which objective religion owes its existence, requires in man a certain readiness to comply with his religious obligations — an intrinsic disposition affecting both his intellect and will, and prompting him to act in accordance with his various relations to God; and this readiness, this promptitude, is subjective religion, which is commonly defined as a virtue that inclines man to give God the homage and service which are His due.

Hence religion, in its true and adequate sense, does not consist merely in feeling, as so many falsely suppose; nor does it consist in objective dependence as such; nor yet exclusively in knowing and believing: but it comprises all these various elements, and finds proper expression, as stated before, in a life of worship and virtue. It is an objective reality supplemented by a subjective condition. It is at once theoretical and practical. Theoretical,

because it implies certain fundamental truths upon which its very existence depends; practical, because it must of its own nature enter as a principle of action into man's daily life.

Distinct from objective and subjective religion, though presupposing both, is religious practice, or the exercise of religion. This may be considered as religion reduced to act; or, taking it in the concrete, as human life itself shaped by the influence of religious principles. Its nature is determined by the objective element in religion, or the duties which man owes to God; whereas for its perfection it depends upon the subjective element, or the virtue of religion, affecting man's intellect and will. This exercise of religion must proceed along two lines, which are interwoven, indeed, yet constitute distinct elements in human life. The reason for this is found in the fact that objective religion implies a twofold law, namely, the law of divine worship, and the law of morality. The former enjoins certain actions that have for their immediate end the veneration of God as the Supreme Being, such as prayer in its various forms, acts of faith, hope and love, and especially adoration and sacrifice; the latter bears reference to hu-

man actions in general, demanding that they be in harmony with the will of God, which is the supreme law governing all rational activity.

Reserving the discussion of the law of morality for the next chapter, we shall at present consider the law of divine worship, both in its theoretical aspect and in its practical bearing upon man's life.

Divine worship, as already stated, consists in acts that have for their immediate end the veneration of God as the Supreme Being, whether these acts be performed in accordance with a definite ritual, established by competent authority, or whether they flow spontaneously from the private devotion of individuals. In the popular mind this worship is always more or less identified with prayer; nor is this view in any way erroneous, in as much as prayer is the very soul of worship. Strictly speaking, however, the distinctive feature of worship is an expression of love and loyalty, which differentiates it from other acts of a religious nature.

To understand this important matter clearly, we must, at the very outset of our discussion, distinguish between the different kinds of

worship, as conditioned by human nature. Man is a compound being, consisting of a visible body and an invisible soul. In virtue of his composite nature, he is capable of originating two different kinds of acts. Some of his acts remain entirely in the mental faculty from which they proceed, as thought and volition; others find outward expression in the body to which they are communicated, as speaking and singing. The former are internal, the latter external acts. Corresponding to these different acts, there are two kinds of worship; the one is internal, and consists in the unspoken affections of the soul, as she leans in humble yet confiding reverence upon the bosom of divine love; the other is external, and translates these same affections into vocal prayer, the singing of sacred songs, or into the imposing ceremonies of the Church's ritual service.

Again, man is by nature both an individual and a social being. Though he has an independent existence as a rational nature, yet he is at the same time a member of society, on which he depends in a thousand different ways. Under both aspects he has duties to God, Who is the author of society no less than

of the individual. Hence there results a second division of divine worship, which is either private or public, according as it proceeds from man as a private individual or as a member of society.

Now, all these different kinds of worship, internal and external, private and public, are for man a matter of the strictest obligation. It has, indeed, been contended that the duty of divine worship cannot be demonstrated, in as much as the worship of the creature is altogether useless to the Creator; yet this objection rests upon a false supposition, and is, therefore, without value. We do not worship God because we fancy that our worship is of profit to Him; such fancy would be foolish indeed; because as He is of Himself infinitely perfect and boundlessly happy, "He does not dwell within the regions of utility." The fundamental reason underlying divine worship is that to which St. John pointed when he said: "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power: because thou hast created all things, and for thy will they were, and have been created." The creature's worship is indeed useless to the Creator, but this notwithstanding, He is infinitely

worthy of such worship, and therefore it must be rendered Him by the creature.

This being premised, we may now proceed to prove the proposition that divine worship is for man a matter of strict obligation. In doing this, comparatively little stress need be laid on that which is merely internal. Not that internal worship is of minor importance; on the contrary, it is most essential; for God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth; He demands the homage of faith and love and trust: but there is no special need of demonstrating such an obligation, as it is evidently implied in the general obligations of religion, which were established in the preceding chapter. If man is in duty bound, as was there shown, to submit his intellect and will to God, he must needs make acts of faith and love and trust; his mind and heart must rise in reverence and gratitude and adoration to the Author of his being: and as these acts are internal, the necessity of internal worship can evidently not be separated from the necessity of religion as such. Whosever, therefore, admits that religion is a matter of duty, must also admit that man is in duty bound to practice internal worship.

Of course, in practice men not rarely fail to recognize even this evident obligation. There are not wanting those whose hearts never rise in gratitude to the God Who made them; whose affections never respond to the solicitations of divine love; whose minds never bow in submission to the Creator's sovereign majesty: but they are men whose moral vision has been so blurred by their absorption in worldly interests, that they have almost ceased to be human. They eat and drink and work and sleep, as do the beasts of burden that serve them, and like unto these same beasts, they limit their aspirations to the fleeting things of time. They revel in the gifts of divine bounty, and have never a thought for the Giver. Their lives are moral monstrosities, begotten of ignorance and passion.

More numerous, however, than these unsightly excrescences of human nature, are those other men and women, who, whilst they still bear God in grateful remembrance, yet fail to render Him the external worship that is His due. With some of them it seems to have become almost a fundamental principle, that God is satisfied with the heart; that He does not care about the external manifestation

of religious sentiments. Hence they spend days and weeks without saying a single vocal prayer; whilst they keep the Sabbath only as a day of rest and recreation. That this class of people is very numerous, no one, who gives the matter serious thought, can fail to see. Reliable statistics show that of the eighty million inhabitants of this fair country of ours, scarcely twenty millions attend divine services on Sunday; and that the others do not make up for their neglect of public worship by private devotions, is sufficiently evident from the whole tenor of their lives. They have forgotten the prayers which they learnt in their childhood days; yes, forgotten even how to say: "Our Father, who art in heaven." And all this they try to justify by having recourse to the absurd supposition, that God is satisfied with the worship of the spirit.

To prove that any supposition, which eliminates exterior expression of religious sentiments, is absurd, and that therefore external worship is of strict obligation, it would be sufficient to call attention to the fact that it is practically impossible to separate internal and external worship. Soul and body are so intimately united, that the affections of the one

are almost of necessity communicated to the other. Can you rejoice or be sad, love or hate, be humble or proud, without giving some exterior sign of what takes place in the sanctuary of your hearts? Does not the human countenance interpret with unmistakable clearness feelings of shame and fear and anger? Yet fear and anger and love and hatred are affections of the soul, and find expression in the body only because of the close union that makes of the two component elements but one complete being. A mere thought, or simple resolve, may indeed be concealed from human eyes, but any internal act that appeals to human affections overflows spontaneously the source whence it took its rise. Now, can there be religious sentiments without affections of some kind? Or are religious sentiments essentially different from such as are merely human? Under given conditions they are indeed of a higher order, but that does not interfere with their effects upon the human compound. If love of father and mother can kindle the eye of the child, has not the love of God the same power in regard to His reasonable creatures, who are in very deed the children of His predilection? If human ex-

cellence inspires visible admiration and reverence, must not the greater excellence of the Divinity do the same? If inferiority of condition can give rise to humble deportment in human affairs, is there no room for exterior expression of humility when reference is made to divine Majesty? Common sense would make short work of such foolish suppositions, but the trouble is that in religious matters common sense is too often sacrificed upon the altar of passion. Men who say that they are satisfied with the worship of the heart are not likely to do much worshipping of any kind. They are too proud or too sensual to bend the knee before the altar of God on earth, and too earthly minded to raise their hearts to His throne in heaven. All their talk about the sufficiency of internal worship is but a sop to their outraged consciences. A certain wit very aptly expressed the moral value of all such proceedings, when he said: "These men simulate the nature of angels, so that they may with impunity live after the manner of beasts."

Whilst internal worship thus almost necessarily finds its complement in that which is external, it is in its turn wondrously intensified

"by being blazoned forth in vocal utterance, singing, bending of knees," and other exterior signs of reverence. As a modern writer on the subject has well expressed it: "'Worship mostly of the silent sort,' worship that finds no expression in word or gesture,—worship away from pealing organs and chants of praise, or the simpler music of the human voice, where no hands are uplifted, nor tongues loosened, nor posture of reverence assumed, becomes with most mortals a vague, aimless reverie, a course of distraction and dreaminess and vacancy of mind." It is for this reason that the Catholic Church, for example, has introduced such grandeur and pomp into her ritual ceremonies. The lighted taper, the curling smoke of incense, the inspiration of her solemn chant, and the organ's rapturous peal, carry the faithful soul upon angel's wings to the throne of God, "to whom," as St. John words it, be "benediction and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, honor and power and strength, forever and ever."

Aside, however, from all psychological and physiological conditions, there are certain fundamental reasons that make the obligation

of external worship quite clear to every unbiased mind. The nature of religious worship is determined by the objective element in religion, or, what comes ultimately to the same, by the nature of man's dependence on God. Now man depends on God not merely as a spirit, but as a compound being, consisting of soul and body; hence both elements must contribute to divine worship. Man's body is not so much inert matter, but is vivified by the rational soul, and, in virtue of this, is made to share in the privileges and duties of that same soul. It cannot, indeed, render homage to God independently of its vivifying principle, but conjointly with the same, it can contribute in a subordinate manner to such homage. Do not the folded hands and the bowed head and the bent knee speak of reverence for God, and of submission to His sovereign Majesty? Is not the voice of His wandering children, as it rises in petition or praise to His throne of mercy, sweet music to the ears of the Heavenly Father? Ask a mother what she thinks of the fondling caresses of her child. Ask her whether she values the light of love that flashes from the eye of her child to her own. Ask her whether she feels

no thrill of sweetest joy when her child utters that mystic name, Mother. Why, it is the very sunshine of her life. And yet the heart of the mother was fashioned to the image and likeness of God's own heart. Its longings and joys are but the sympathetic throbbings of God's boundless love. What a mother values in the conduct of her child, that God esteems in the worship of His creatures. Hence man is able to worship God by means of his body; he is able to render God external worship; and if able, he is also in duty bound: because the creature must glorify the Creator in accordance with its own nature; man must pay tithe to God for soul and body, by offering Him the love of the one and the obeisance of the other.

Again, the obligation of external worship follows necessarily from the fact that man is a social being. As God is the author of the individual, so is He also the author of society. It is because the Creator fashioned man in such wise that he can attain his perfect development only through communication with his fellow beings, that the family and the state and other social institutions took their rise. From God comes the authority that leads human society to its appointed end. He is the

primary source of all just laws, and from Him they have their binding force and final sanction. On God, therefore, society depends, and that dependence it must acknowledge; yet such acknowledgment can be made only when citizen associates with citizen, and subjects with their rulers, in the solemn function of public worship. This public worship of its very nature postulates certain external rites and ceremonies, whereby all the members of society are enabled to act in concert, and thus pay tribute to the common Lord and Ruler. Hence even if man were not obliged to worship God externally as a private individual, he would still be in duty bound to render Him such worship as a member of society.

This matter may perhaps become somewhat clearer if we view it in the concrete. Let us suppose that the President of the United States were to visit this city in his official capacity as the Head of the nation. There is not one of the good citizens of St. Louis who does not recognize the Ruler's supreme authority, or who does not have the greatest respect for the bearer of that authority. However, on the plea that interior respect and reverence for superiors is sufficient, all agree that

there is to be no public demonstration of any kind. Official notice of the coming visit is received; the papers publish it as any other news-item; but no arrangements whatever are made for the President's reception. At the specified time the distinguished visitor and his followers arrive, expecting to find the city officials and other representative men gathered in the station to bid them welcome. But no, there is no sign of any gathering. People are hurrying to and fro, as is always the case in important railway stations, but no one seems to concern himself about the President and his party; except perhaps to stare at them through idle curiosity. Then some of the visitors become indignant, and inquire what may be the meaning of it all? Why is there no formal welcome extended to the nation's Chief? They are told very politely, that the citizens of St. Louis are exceedingly grateful for the President's visit; he is most welcome to their fair city — anyone will tell him so: but as to public demonstrations, they seem entirely superfluous. The affections of the heart suffice, and every heart in St. Louis beats for the nation's Head.

Do you think that such an explanation

would satisfy the visitors? Why, they would consider it an insult to the whole nation, and the entire country would view it in the same light. Every newspaper in the land would issue extra editions to pour out its wrath upon the delinquent city. The mayor and high functionaries and leading citizens would be compared to savages of darkest Africa, but only to be ranked below them in matters of politeness and propriety. And yet why so much ado about nothing? Can the President expect to receive more consideration than the God whose servant he is? Surely the servant is not above the master. If external and public worship need not be rendered to God, how can the President of a nation presume to demand popular demonstrations? You may say that he represents the people, and in the slight put upon him the majesty of the nation has been outraged. That is very true; but is the sovereignty of a nation above the sovereignty of the God Who called that nation into being? Is not God the King of kings, and the Lord of lords? From whom does the authority emanate that makes the nation what it is, if not from God, Who is the source of all authority in heaven and on earth? Why, it is sheer

folly, and involves the most glaring contradiction, to pay homage to earthly potentates and at the same time to set aside the worship of God. If God need not be worshipped by individuals and by society, then Anarchists and Nihilists are right when they refuse to recognize the authority of kings and rulers. They start out, indeed, with a false supposition, but in the application of their own principles they are perfectly logical. Take away the sovereign authority of God, and you destroy the very foundation of all authority on earth; refuse to worship God, and you stultify yourselves by paying homage to man.

Nor will it do to fall back upon the foolish notion of an absentee God, Who sits upon His throne of splendor in the high heavens, and leaves this poor, struggling world of ours to its own devices. He is more intimately present to the individual heart and to human society than ever earthly ruler was or can be to his subjects; for in Him we live and move and have our being. He is more interested in our welfare than the most loving mother can be interested in the welfare of her only child; though a mother should forget the son of her sorrow, yet will He not forget us; for

lo, in His hands has He written us. He desires more ardently the worship of His creatures than the blushing bride longs for the caresses of her youthful lover; for He created us for Himself, and His glory He will not give to another. No, He is not an absentee God; He has not abandoned the works of His hands: but it is man who has turned away from his Creator; it is the child who has forgotten the love of his Father.

The duty, therefore, of worshipping God, is a plain and necessary demand of right reason. It is only gross ignorance or the sway of passion that can account for its neglect. Hence to the men of our own day are applicable those terrible words of the Apostle, uttered against the infidel and idolatrous Gentiles: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice: because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them. For the visible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity: so that they are inexcusable. Because that when

they knew God, they have not glorified him as God or given thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

CHAPTER V.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

In the second chapter of this booklet, religion was defined as a free acknowledgment of man's dependence on his Creator. The correctness of this definition will hardly be called in question by any one who takes the trouble to analyze such human acts as the common consent of mankind has always classed among acts of religion. They one and all are expressive of the submission which a creature owes to its Creator. Apparently, however, an objection might be raised on the ground that if the given definition were correct, religion would be co-extensive with morality. For every human action, that is morally good, expresses in some way the agent's dependence on and submission to God; because it implies an acknowledgment of God's sovereign will as the supreme law that governs all rational activity. The inference is perfectly

legitimate, but it cannot be urged as an objection against the definition in question; for religion not only includes the law of divine worship, as was explained above, but also the law of morality, as we shall endeavor to show in the present chapter.

In regard to this point there is a widespread error, which has infected even those who would resent the imputation of being irreligious. Many there are who consider themselves good Christians, yet who make religion merely a matter of Sunday observance. They seem to regard it as a sort of holiday garb, that is put on once a week, and then carefully laid aside for six days to come. That it must find a place in their work-a-day life; that it must accompany them to the market-place, influence their business transactions, regulate their social intercourse, and be the guardian spirit of the hearthstone, is something altogether foreign to their idea of religion. God and His law have no more bearing upon their plans and schemes and speculations, than the enactments of the Jewish Lawgiver had upon the conduct of the Israelites when he tarried upon Mt. Sinai, whilst they adored the golden calf in the valley below.

With men of this stamp, as has been well said, religion is a formula, and nothing more. They say, Lord, Lord, and then elbow the Lord out of His own creation.

That such persons disgrace the religion which they profess, and are in reality its enemies, is quite obvious. In fact, the greatest enemies of religion are not those who wage open war against it, but rather those other sanctimonious hypocrites who lock it up in their wardrobes. When a person speaks openly against religion, men of sense know that he is only exposing his own ignorance and folly; they know better than to hold religion responsible for his crooked ways: but when a man prays like a saint and lives like a rogue; when of a Sunday he acts like a Christian and on week-days carries on worse than a pagan, the world puts the blame not so much on the man, but rather on the religion which he professes. It is this glaring contradiction between belief and practice, as witnessed in vast multitudes of our so-called Christians, that is leading the world into unbelief.

In this condition of things, it becomes a matter of absolute necessity to bring home to the conscience of the individual and of so-

ciety men's accountability to God for the actions of their daily lives. It becomes again necessary to insist upon a truth that is plainer than daylight, namely, that the Creator exacts of His creatures not only the worship of prayer, but also the homage of virtue. Yet this can be done only by going back to first principles; by bringing man face to face with his Creator, and pointing out to him the law engraven upon his heart in the very act of creation. Men have forgotten the full bearing of the creative act; they have lost sight of the far-reaching consequences which that act necessarily involves, and hence they have ruled religion out of their daily lives. Let a man be practically conscious of the plain fact that he is a creature, not only on Sundays, but on week-days as well, and he will recognize at once the utter folly of divorcing religion from morality.

Now, to prove the assertion implied in the foregoing remarks, namely, that the fact of creation makes the Creator's will the source of moral obligation, and that this obligation is inseparably bound up with religion, I might insist upon the evident truth that a creature belongs more absolutely to the Creator than

a slave belongs to his master. For this being clearly understood, it will readily be admitted that man must consult God's will in all he does. However, for clearness sake, we shall approach the subject from another point of view, examining somewhat in detail the manner in which a creature exercises its activity.

In the preceding chapter allusion was made to the fact that a being, which derived its existence from a creative cause, is dependent on that same cause for the use of its natural powers. In this the creative act differs from other modes of production; the dependence of the effect on its cause is more absolute, and hence the consequences of that act are necessarily more far-reaching. The nature of this dependence may perhaps be made somewhat clearer by means of an illustration, though, of course, the illustration is necessarily inadequate. The very fact, for example, that a watchmaker puts together the mechanism of a watch, does not enable it to keep time; he must supply other necessary conditions. He must impart to the spring a portion of his own energy, which is there stored up in the form of tension, and only in virtue of this tension can the mechanism be put into operation.

Similarly, though not in the same manner, must the Creator place His own energy at the disposal of His creatures that they may be able to use the powers which they have in virtue of their natural constitution. I say, not in the same manner, because the watchmaker in the example given, has only an indirect influence upon the action of the watch; he modifies the spring, and the spring thus modified sets the mechanism in motion: but God's influence upon the actions of His creatures is direct; He not only sustains their powers whilst they act, but He exerts an immediate and physical influence upon the action itself. He and His creatures act together, and it is by these combined efforts, so to speak, that finite causes produce their effects. As these causes are dependent in their essence, so must they also be dependent in their operation; else the effects of finite causes would be superior to the causes themselves, which is impossible. Hence no action proceeding from a finite being is independent of the Creator's co-operation. He has a part in every one of them, even in such as are sinful, though in that case, it is only the physical goodness of the action,

and not its moral depravity, that can be referred to Him as its partial cause.

Perhaps this last remark needs a word of explanation, so as to prevent misunderstanding its real import. In every rational action we may consider two parts; the action itself as a physical entity, and its relation to the law of moral rectitude. Thus if a man tells a lie, we have first the physical act of speaking, and secondly the falsehood of the statement made. The speaking in itself, as a merely physical act, is in its moral aspect neither good nor bad; its morality comes from the free will of the speaker, who uses his power of speech either in accordance with or opposed to right reason. Now it is only with the first part, namely, the physical act of speaking, and not with its moral aspect, that God co-operates, for the moral aspect in itself has no physical reality, and therefore it does not need God's active concurrence. And so in every other evil act; its physical goodness comes partially from God, its moral depravity proceeds entirely from man.

Now from this follows a very important consequence. As God is infinite wisdom and holiness, it cannot be a matter of indifference

to Him with what manner of act He shall co-operate. He Himself must necessarily act in accordance with His own infinitely perfect nature, and, therefore, He must necessarily will that the creature, with whose action He concurs, shall also act in harmony with that same nature. As Creator He is both Lord and King; He is absolute owner and proprietor of all His works; He can do with them as He pleases: but as He is infinitely perfect, it must necessarily please Him to do what is in keeping with His own perfection; and as He takes part in the activity of His creatures, He must exercise sovereign authority over them, and direct their actions by His own divine will. On the other hand, as creatures depend on their Creator both for their being and for the exercise of their activity, they must be subject to His authority in all they do, and must make His will the norm of their actions. Consequently the Creator's will is the creature's law — a law that is universal in its extension and absolute in its binding force.

What has thus far been said applies to all creatures, irrespective of their specific natures. They are one and all under the Creator's ju-

risdiction, whether they be rational or irrational, living or inanimate. God must direct them all to their appointed end, though that direction is necessarily accommodated to the nature of each single being. In beings that are devoid of reason, this direction finds expression in the physical determination of their specific powers, whereby they are constrained to act in a certain predefined way, from which they cannot swerve by so much as a hair's breadth; but in beings endowed with intellect and free will, this same direction assumes the form of a law, enunciated by the practical reason, which manifests at once the existence of the law and its binding force. The law thus enunciated is the moral law, to which man's actions must be conformable. It is a law written in the intellect after the manner of knowledge, and communicated to the will as a moral obligation. It leaves man, indeed, physically free, yet morally it binds him down to a line of conduct from which he may not swerve. The binding force of this law is identical with the binding force of the Creator's sovereign will, for it is but the manifestation of that will in rational nature.

Taking this view of the matter, as we nec-

essarily must, it is quite manifest that morality and religion are linked in a union that is inseparable. Nay, in a certain sense, morality is religion and religion is morality, because both consist essentially in a free acknowledgment of man's dependence on God. In ordinary parlance a distinction is drawn between the two, but that is because men ordinarily judge of human actions as they appear outwardly and in themselves, not as they are specified by motives that influence the will. But even if we take religion in a more restricted sense, its connection with morality is necessarily inferred from what has been said in the preceding paragraph. As a system of belief, religion teaches man his true relations to the Author of his existence, and inclines his will to act in accordance with these relations. It points to God as the Supreme Being, the beginning and end of all that was made, and thus it enjoins the duty of divine worship; it points to the same God as the Sovereign Ruler, the fountainhead of all law and order, and thereby it enforces the law of morality. Hence morality is but the fruit that grows upon the tree of religion; and both the tree and its fruit, religion and morality, derive

their life and force and vigor from the creative act as their common root.

The same conclusion is reached, when we consider the need of adequate sanction to make the law effective. This sanction consists both in a proportionate reward for the observance of the law, and a condign punishment for its violation. The very fact that the moral law extends itself to all rational activity, as shown above, implies that its sanction must extend itself to the same. Yet if religion be set aside, this is impossible. Human justice cannot reach what escapes human knowledge, and the vast majority of men's actions, whether good or bad, escape all detection. With regard to merely internal acts, and most of those that are of a private character, this is always the case; hence in respect to them, the law would practically be left without sanction. It is, indeed, sometimes said that virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment, yet that axiom, like many others of its kind, is only half true, and that half exerts little influence on men's conduct. Will the average person keep his heart pure and his mind clean, or respect his own body, if he be unmindful of the God of purity, Whose all-seeing eye reads the most se-

cret thoughts and discerns the most hidden actions, and Whose all-powerful hand metes out for them either reward or punishment according as they are good or evil? Will he struggle against feelings of anger and envy and covetousness, if he does not fear the God Who has uttered His solemn, "Thou shalt not," against the indulgence of all inordinate thoughts and emotions? What will keep him from yielding to the promptings of his corrupt nature? Perhaps you say that the dignity and majesty of human nature forbid such breaches of the moral order. Suppose they did, what difference would that make? Are you unaware that the dignity and majesty of human nature count for little in the presence of strong passions, or under the influence of powerful extrinsic motives? Besides it is not true that human nature, when considered without reference to God, forbids the violation of the moral order. No one can be his own superior, yet it is only a superior who can forbid or command. The most that human nature as such can do, is to suggest rules of propriety; it cannot make laws or formulate precepts; and what force is there in rules of propriety? They yield to human passions as a straw bends

to the wind. Hence if religion be ruled out, man's will is not restrained by any law, and his heart becomes the sporting ground of unruly passions.

Nor do matters look more encouraging when we consider external or public morality. Will the poor man bear patiently the burden of want and suffering, when unseen by human eye he can stretch forth his hand to his neighbor's possessions, and does not dread the justice of Him from whom nothing is hidden? Will merchants and tradesmen and public officials regulate their conduct by any other norm than the "rules of the game" if they cast aside the thought of Him Who is not a respecter of persons? To what an extent clever scoundrels, who usually pass under the more honorable appellation of shrewd business men, are able to elude human justice is sufficiently evident from the disgraceful scandals that have lately filled the columns of our daily papers. Colossal fortunes are amassed by deliberately planning and encompassing the ruin of thousands, yet the perpetrators of these crimes enjoy without let or hindrance all the honors and comforts that their ill-gotten wealth can bestow. And what happens in the

business world has its counterpart in every other sphere of social and industrial activity. Where there are no other safeguards of morality than the laws of the state and the majesty of human nature, there is recognized but one virtue and one crime, the former of the two spelling success, and the latter failure.

Hence religion must step in and bring home to each individual, and to society as well, this most certain truth, that the present life is in all its parts and aspects but a preparation for the life to come. It must teach man that the chief purpose of his earthly existence is not to root and dig and delve, but by virtuous acts to perfect the image of the Godhead, which was engraven upon his being by the hand of his Creator. It is only when religion, with its sacramental influences, lays its hand upon both heart and mind, that man finds the strength and courage to shake off the unruly passions that dog his every step. Only when religious conviction brings home to him the undeniable fact that there is a silent witness to his every action, Who will in His own good time exact a strict account of all his doings, can he walk with unfaltering step in the ways of righteousness. Only when he realizes that

virtue shall not fail of its reward and that crime shall not go without its punishment, will he find it worth his while to practice the one and to eschew the other. Then, and then only, can he rise superior to personal expediency and self-interest, so that whatever his intellect may judge to be the right course of action, his will shall forthwith be ready to pursue the same. Even then he may have his moments of weakness; he may stumble and fall; but he has that within him which will make him rise again, and live a wiser and a stronger man.

From this it will be readly understood, how sad a mistake is made by those who would set up a sort of independent morality, as is done by the advocates of our so-called Ethical Culture Societies. There are, indeed, well-meaning men among the promoters of this new fad, but, in spite of their good intention, they lead to inevitable destruction the society which they professedly endeavor to save. "Religion," they say, "has failed as a moral regenerator, now let us put the dignity and majesty of human nature in its place. Let man be a law unto himself, and in subjection to this law, let him work out his destiny. Instead of consecrating human attention and enthusiasm to

worship, we are to concentrate it rather on the way we live and work. We are to pay regard to human character more than to what men believe. The moral ideal is the only object worthy of our religious veneration; it must take the place which Christ or God holds in the prevalent view." From these and similar statements, made by the leaders of the Ethical Culture fad, it is sufficiently manifest that they aim at nothing less than to banish religion from the sphere of morality, and what is this but adding fuel to the flame? It is true enough that we must concentrate human attention on the way we live and work; it is true enough that we must pay regard to the formation of character; but this cannot be done by relegating religious worship and religious beliefs to the background. Ethical Culture Societies are much to be recommended for insisting upon the Law of Righteousness, but they must be utterly condemned for removing the foundation upon which alone that law can rest securely. It is sheer folly to make human nature the source of obligations which can receive force only from the Author of that nature. The world has been doing this ever since it turned its back upon God, and see

what we are to-day — a people Christian in name but pagan in deed. It is not that religion has failed, but that men have cast religion to the winds.

Sadder still is the spectacle presented to the world by the course pursued in the Public School system. Nowhere is religious influence of more vital importance than in the education of the young. Banish God from the class-room, and moral training, which is the chief part of education, becomes an impossibility. What room is there for moral training where the very principles from which the moral law derives its binding force are studiously set aside? Where the forceful mandate of the Supreme Lawgiver: "Thou shalt do this; thou shalt not do that," yields its place to the meaningless counsel suggested by self-respect: "It is becoming to do this; it is unbecoming to do that." It is precisely this ungodly education, if education it may be called, that peoples the country with moral weaklings. Years ago, Horace Mann, a strong advocate of our Common Schools, pointedly remarked: "If the intellect, however gifted, be not governed by a sense of justice, a love of mankind, and a devotion to duty, its possessor is only

a more splendid, as he is a more dangerous barbarian. For we are fully persuaded that the salt of religious truth can alone preserve education from abuse." Well, our schools have rejected the salt of religious truth, and as a result both public and private morality are fast reaching so low an ebb, that even the most enthusiastic advocates of our Public School system begin to doubt the wisdom of their ways.

With reference to morality, therefore, there is set us a twofold task; First, we must widen and deepen our knowledge of God and of our relations to Him; second, we must train our will so that it may ever act in accordance with this knowledge. In regard to the first, it may possibly be objected that knowledge of God does not necessarily imply moral perfection. That is true; even the greatest theologian may, from a moral point of view, be a very imperfect man. Nevertheless, all else being equal, of two given men, the one who strives more earnestly to store his mind with the sacred truths of religion is the better man. Morally considered we are such as our thoughts and affections are, and they are necessarily colored by the objects that busy our understanding,

and the truths that are stored in our memory. Of old there stood in the desert of Egypt a famous statue of Memnos. Whilst the darkness of night held the earth enshrouded, it stood there silent and forbidding in that lonely waste; but as soon as the first rays of the morning sun fell softly and warmly athwart its brow, there issued from its interior strains of sweetest music. So it is with the soul of man. When she busies herself exclusively with things of this world, she is enveloped in darkness; she is spiritually dead: but when quickened by the warmth of God's beauty and love, she gives forth the music of holy thoughts, which almost invariably end in the sweet refrain: Our Father, who art in heaven. It has been said that to know God aright is to love Him, and to do His holy will; and nothing is truer. Not that knowledge is love; not that knowledge is virtue: but such is the beauty of God's perfections, such the lovableness of His being, that from a right understanding of them, love springs forth as naturally as a flower from its stem, and then blossoms into virtue.

But aside from the fact that religious knowledge, as a rule, improves the moral condition

of the soul, it is an indispensable prerequisite to the right ordering of the will, in which true morality essentially consists. The whole moral order may be summed up in this one supreme law: Do good and avoid evil; but the keeping of this law necessarily presupposes knowledge of the good that is to be done, and the evil that is to be avoided. The will is a blind faculty; it does not see by its own light, nor is it guided by instinct, but it must be directed by the understanding. Consequently it is incumbent upon every one to acquaint himself fully and thoroughly with all the duties of his state in life; with the whole law of God as far as it applies to Him, and with the motives he has for keeping that law. Our first duty to God is to know Him; not in a vague, undefined sort of a way, but with a knowledge that will bear fruit in a life of prayer and virtue. Through this knowledge religion lays its hand gently but firmly upon the tumultuous passions of the human heart and bids them be still. It lays its hand upon the will itself, directs it to follow the dictates of right reason, supplies it with motives to withstand the promptings of corrupt nature, and encourages it to rise superior to every dif-

ficulty in the way of righteousness. Thus a moral instinct is developed, the character is fortified against temptations, love of justice springs up in the heart, and by doing and suffering man weaves perfect in warp and woof the beauteous fabric of a godly life.

This double task, set us in reference to morality, is necessarily the work of a life-time. It must begin in childhood's earliest day, when through the warmth of a mother's love the childish heart expands and feels the first sweet influence of the greater love of God; it must receive fairer form and more enduring strength during the long years of religious school education; and must finally arrive at full perfection through the unceasing struggles for moral rectitude that make up a life of practical faith. Hence not only is it the most sacred duty of parents to provide for their children a thorough religious education, but there rests upon every single human being the solemn obligation to continue in his own behalf the moral training begun in childhood days. As the days of our life steal silently by, and year is added to year, we must keep our eyes ever fixed upon Him Who made us to His own image and likeness, and like unto His

own divine Son, we must grow in wisdom and grace, even as we advance in age.

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing discussion, little or no reference has been made to the final cause of creation, or, to the reasons which were present to the Creator's mind, and in a manner determined His will to exercise His creative power. This omission is perhaps to be regretted, as thus some very strong arguments for the practice of religion have been passed by unnoticed. On the other hand, however, it was hardly possible to treat the matter with that thoroughness which its importance demands, without, at the same time, extending this booklet to undue proportions. It has, therefore, seemed preferable to add a few paragraphs by way of conclusion, which may enable the reader to formulate his own arguments.

In this matter of final casuality, we must distinguish a twofold element. First, the reasons which directly influence a person's will and determine him to do a certain work; sec-

ondly, the end towards the attainment of which the work in question is directed. Thus, for instance, the reason that ordinarily determines a watchmaker to construct a watch is the gaining of a livelihood; but the end which the watch is meant to attain is the keeping of time. These two elements are found in every final cause, though sometimes they may be objectively identified.

Now, if we apply this to the creation of the world, we find that the Creator must have had some reason why He called the world into being, and that the world itself must have been intended by Him to attain a certain end. With regard to the first, it is sufficiently clear that the Creator could not have been influenced by anything extrinsic to Himself; because, as was shown before, He is infinitely perfect, and therefore independent of all that exists, or can exist, outside of His own being. Hence distinct from His own perfections, there was nothing whatever that could serve Him as a motive for creation. Yet something there must have been on account of which He freely chose to create the world, for as He is infinite wisdom, He cannot act without a sufficient reason; and this something, we find on

analysis, was His own intrinsic goodness. Boundlessly happy in the possession of His infinite perfections, He wished to share that happiness with beings made to His own image and likeness. So that every creature is in itself a visible manifestation of the Creator's goodness, and as such presents to reasonable man a pledge of God's gratuitous love.

The second element involved in the final cause of creation is, as stated above, the end for the attainment of which the world was called into being. This end must be finite in itself, and yet it must bear direct reference to the Creator. It must be finite, because it is to be attained by finite beings; it must bear direct reference to the Creator, because as He is the source whence creatures derive their being, so must He also be the final term towards which that being tends. Now there is just one such end possible, and that is God's own glory. This glory is fundamentally contained in the very being of creatures, because they are all finite imitations of God's infinite perfections; and in this sense, all creatures proclaim the glory of their Creator. Formally, however, it consists in acts of knowledge and love and praise, whereby creatures

endowed with intellect and free will bear witness to the Creator's intrinsic excellence, as shown forth in the wonderful works of His hands. Both forms of glory were necessarily intended by the Creator, yet it is only in the latter that the end of creation is fully attained. Hence, man, as a reasonable creature, exists ultimately for the sole purpose of knowing, loving and praising the God Who called him into being. Yet in this again shines forth God's infinite goodness and love, for the very glory which man must render his Creator constitutes his own greatest happiness for time and for eternity.

That these facts present strong arguments in favor of religion, must become quite evident on a moment's reflection. Love begets love. If God has loved man first, then man must love God in return. God requires, and ever must require, the services of his creatures, yet the conditions of that service are such as to make it a worship of love. It was love that moved God to give us being; it was love that determined Him to fashion us after His own image and likeness; and so it must be love that leads back our being to its source; it must be love that perfects in us the image of the God-

head: yet this love is but the perfection of religion, which finds practical expression in a life of worship and virtue.

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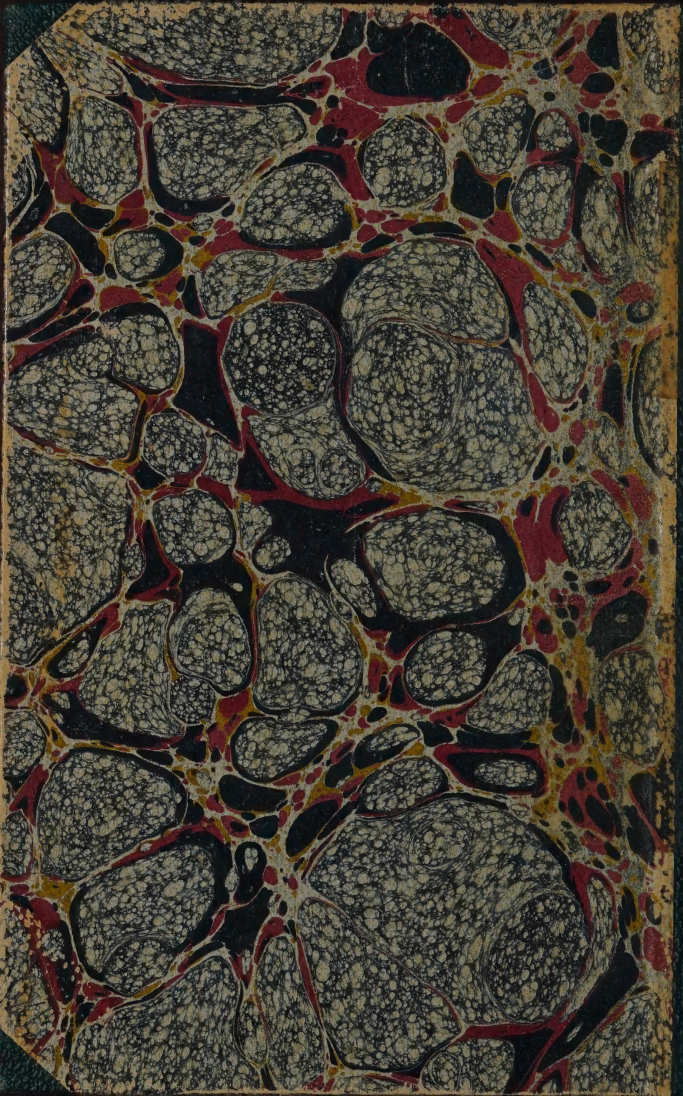
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